

# Bear Valley:

*Where Anchorage greets the last frontier!*



## **Bear Valley Community Council Meeting Minutes BVCC meeting – October 11, 2006**

Compiled by Scott Pexton, BVCC Secretary

The council meeting was held in the Arts & Crafts Room at the Bear Valley Elementary School, 15001 Mountain Air Drive and began at approximately 7:15 pm. Over thirty people attended and twenty-six residents signed the Meeting Register indicating a quorum of council members present.

**BVCC Chair Cheri Howland** started the meeting and indicated that BVCC Vice-Chair Jim Steele was out of town on his way back to Anchorage would not be able to attend this meeting. She introduced Lance Wilber, Municipality of Anchorage Traffic Department Director.

### **Hillside Sub-Area Traffic Study**

**Anchorage Traffic Department Director Lance Wilber** presented a map of the study area that depicted some potential road alignments for consideration within the approximate 550 acres of undeveloped land located immediately east of the Bear Valley Council boundary. He indicated that the study would be scheduled to go before the municipal Planning and Zoning Commission on either the 4<sup>th</sup> or 11<sup>th</sup> of December and that he can return to the community council in November, if needed.

Lance spoke briefly about the background of the study and indicated that he initiated meetings during 2005 with members of HALO, Rabbit Creek Community Council and Bear Valley Community Council and six large lot landowners to discuss the study elements, including potential road alignments and trail locations. They originally estimated that approximately 700 houses could theoretically be built if lots were created based on the maximum zoning. After further consideration, the number of planned units was reduced to 400 units estimated for about 500 acres of potential subdivision developments. The number of housing units is an important piece of information to use to estimate the number of vehicle trips per day for traffic planning purposes. The draft study identifies alternative road routing to the north of the land (towards Bear Valley Elementary School); instead of routing all traffic west to Goldenview Drive. The study estimates that if the alternative roads were built, approximately 35% of the traffic from the new subdivisions would utilize the northern routes to Rabbit Creek Road and the rest would use the western routes to Goldenview Drive.

There will be impacts to areas outside of the study area boundaries if these subdivisions and roads are developed. Some of the potential impacts may result in the need for upgrades to the intersection of Goldenview Drive and Rabbit Creek Road, such as a traffic signal or a roundabout. The study also has recommended potential connections to three roads in the Rabbit Creek View/Heights subdivision of Bear Valley: Byron Street, Marino (not Marion as depicted on study map), and Jamie Avenue. Some of the roads would likely be designed to collector street standards, but actual design depends on wetlands and other issues. Access from Rabbit Creek Road via Mountain Air Drive would need larger turn lanes from both directions. Lance indicated that the study was not required by any municipal law and would essentially be a voluntary effort to be coordinated by the municipality, landowners, LRSAs, state officials, and community councils.

Lance mentioned that several historically used pedestrian trails were not dedicated rights of way so they would not necessarily be located in the same locations as they exist now, but efforts would be made to have trail connections to Bear Valley Elementary School and to Goldenview Drive. Lance indicated the potential funding may be available from the State of Alaska in conjunction with funding from the area subdivision developers, but that a key factor would be how the new roads would be maintained and who would pay for the maintenance. He said the proposed access roads for the northern route is not within existing Limited Road Service Areas nor within the Anchorage Road District Service Area (ARDSA), so those details would need to be worked out.

Other issues include fire and emergency access, drainage concerns, wetlands protection, existing substandard roads in Bear Valley and affects of increased traffic, construction schedules, and liability concerns. Lance's phone number is 343-8406 and his email address is [WilberLR@ci.anchorage.ak.us](mailto:WilberLR@ci.anchorage.ak.us)

### **Assembly Updates**

**Assemblymember Chris Birch** mentioned that road connectivity was an objective for future subdivision developments and that access to Chugach State Park was a priority for lands adjacent or near the park boundaries. He mentioned that State Representative Mike Hawker had successfully obtained funding related to Chugach Park access in the Glen Alps area and along the Rabbit Lake trail. Mr. Birch indicated that he was involved with efforts to remove spruce bark beetle trees and to revegetate areas where tree and brush removals efforts had already been done. He also mentioned that a number of appointments had recently been made for Boards and Commissions and that there were lots of opportunities for people if they wanted to volunteer to serve on a municipal board or commission.

Diane Holmes (member of RCCC) indicated that approximately \$200,000 had recently been allocated for revegetation efforts associated with the Firewise Program and she implied that it was a lot of money to spend on grass seed that could possibly be done more cheaply using volunteers. Mr. Birch indicated that the municipal forester, Sue Barkwood (formerly Sue Rodman) was the point of contact for Firewise projects and that she could provide details about the revegetation efforts.

Todd Brown indicated that municipal officials need to look at development efforts from the standpoint of affected residents because individuals and developers make changes to their properties, but the changes often have negative impacts to other peoples' properties. Deficiencies in the planning process can lead to drainage and flooding problems, glaciations, inadequate culverts, etc. Another individual spoke about problems with recent construction activities performed on lands within the Hillside Study Area lots where around 99 acres were partially cleared leading to drainage problems and damage to access roads and other properties. He indicated that enforcement is not stringent enough to discourage developers from these practices, as stop work orders and fines of up to \$1,000 don't really deter developers that stand to make a lot of money. Several people expressed concerns about poor or non-existent hydrology studies, drainage and erosion concerns, and indicated that better enforcement tools were needed to address these problems.

**Assemblymember Janice Shamberg** indicated that she was working on a new municipal ordinance proposal to increase the penalties for habitual traffic offenders, such as red-light runners, speeders, and DWI offenders, etc. She indicated the new law if passed could be in effect in a few months and that it may involve impounding vehicles and stiffer fines for people with multiple traffic offenses.

### **Police Matters**

**Sergeant Cindi Stanton** spoke to the council members and said she has returned to the role of community liaison which she has done for about 2 years. She attends meetings at 35 different councils on behalf of the municipality and listens to and communicates with the councils about their public safety concerns. She indicated that traffic issues dominate recent meetings in the Hillside areas, and that the Goldenview Drive – Rabbit Creek Road intersection is an ongoing problem, particularly with illegal turns and accidents. The morning rush hours, especially between 8 to 9 AM are bad and it is difficult to have police presence due to other higher priorities. Diane Holmes indicated that the problems at that intersection will get worse if these subdivisions are built without alternatives transportation routes. Cindi mentioned that a stop sign was installed at the DeArmoun and Hillside Drive intersection because several fatalities had occurred from vehicle accidents there. Options were discussed for dealing with speeders and slow intersections, such as yellow flashing signs, different types of speed bumps, increased police presence, etc.

### **Fire Safety**

Several municipal fire fighters with Fire Station 10 attended the council meeting. Captain Sean Fredenhagen indicated that he was promoted in February. He previously worked in the downtown part of Anchorage and said that he enjoys working at Fire Station 10. He introduced other members of the fire crew and mentioned that a plaque that was created using 1% for art funds would be dedicated at Fire Station 10 on October 21st by AFN delegates.

The captain and several fire crew members addressed the council, each with a fire or safety message, as summarized below:

- Make home address numbers visible by using large reflective home location street address numbers that are visible from the road. Otherwise, emergency vehicles may have to go down several driveways looking for correct homes during a response, and this wastes time during an emergency;
- Mail boxes can be an arson target (especially plastic mail boxes), so they indicated support for the use of centralized metal mail boxes;
- Replace smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector batteries this month and check monthly;
- Call fire department if a CO detector goes off and they will check out the situation and try to determine a cause;
- Wildfire DVDs are available for public distribution;
- Burn permits are issued online or by stopping by the fire station and the fire department encourages their use to further reduce fuel loads in the Bear Valley area;
- 48% of fires in homes in Alaska are in houses without functioning smoke detectors;
- Carbon monoxide can enter homes or breathing space in vehicles from snow blowers, cars and trucks, furnaces, stoves, fire place, etc., so beware of idling vehicles and make sure areas are properly ventilated;
- Carbon monoxide detectors (and smoke detectors) should be located on every floor of building structures;
- Carbon monoxide detectors have about a 3 to 8 year life and the entire detector needs to be replaced periodically
- October 11<sup>th</sup> is Fire Safety Day; the origin of Fire Safety Day was a result after the Chicago Fire occurred on Oct. 11, 1871 when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern and started the biggest fire in the cities history.

### **BVCC Council Officer Election Results**

Candidates were nominated and elections held for the seven available Council Officer positions with the following results:

Council Chair:	Cheri Howland
Vice Chair:	Vacant (Jim Steele nominated, but not present to accept, so a vote had not occurred yet)
Secretary:	Scott Pexton
Treasurer:	Vacant
Member-at-Large:	Joel Miller
Member-at-Large:	Vacant
Member-at-Large:	Vacant

Four positions remain vacant. Elections for vacant positions may be held at any general meeting if eligible members volunteer or are nominated and accept the opportunity to take proactive steps to resolve community concerns.

### **Centralized Mailboxes**

Cheri Howland mentioned that the letters to indicate preference to change to centralized mail boxes were sent out with the October newsletter and the results should be available by the next council meeting.

### **Other Issues**

- Cheri mentioned that Shawna Popovici, the Southeast Anchorage District Park Manager, would be leading a bus tour of municipal parks lands within the Bear Valley area on Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, leaving Storck Park at 6:30 PM. Six seats are still available so if any council members want to attend they should coordinate with Cheri or Shawna.
- A council member expressed concerns about road and drainage problems along Robert Drive in part due to the amount of road construction traffic this summer while fill was hauled to a lot in along Robert Drive as road ditches were enlarged along Nickleen and/or Carl Streets. Roberts Drive was impacted and became difficult to drive; it was unclear whether emergency vehicles would be able to respond if called to the area due to the poor road conditions. Cheri Howland indicated that she had recently accepted a LRSA Board position and that she would try to find out more details about this matter as well as other potential disputes with the road contractor related to this summer's road maintenance activities in the Rabbit Creek View/Heights LRSA.
- The council meeting adjourned at approximately at 9:15 PM.
- The next Bear Valley Community Council meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, November 8, 2006, 7:00 – 9:00 PM at the Bear Valley Elementary School.**

End of meeting minutes.